

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-14

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SCS-03 DHA-05 H-01 L-03 CIAE-00
INR-07 NSAE-00 PRS-01 /035 W
-----022912 232115Z /41
P 232045Z AUG 77
FM AMEMBASSY LA PAZ
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 6806

C O N F I D E N T I A L LA PAZ 6678

FOR ARA/AND/B AND SCS

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: CARR, SHUM, CASC, BL
SUBJECT: AMERICAN PRISONERS: SANTA CRUZ

REF: (A) STATE 198152, (B) LA PAZ 6561

1. EMBASSY IS NOW OF OPINION THAT SITUATION IN SANTA CRUZ IS IN HAND. DURING MEETING AUGUST 19 BETWEEN CODEL WOLFF AND COL. APARICIO, CONGRESSMAN WOLFF INQUIRED ABOUT SAFETY OF PRISONERS IN VIEW OF CAMACHO'S CONTINUING AS CHIEF OF POLICE. APARICIO ASSURED CONGRESSMAN WOLFF THAT HE (APARICIO) WOULD REMAIN IN SANTA CRUZ UNTIL AUGUST 23 AND THAT CAMACHO WOULD BE REPLACED AS OF AUGUST 22. APARICIO SAID THAT DELAY IN REPLACING CAMACHO DUE MOSTLY TO SEARCH FOR RELIABLE AND HONEST REPLACEMENT. CONSULAR AGENT MCKENNEY REPORTS AUGUST 23 THAT SHE HAS IT FROM TWO RELIABLE SOURCES THAT CAMACHO WAS INDEED RELIEVED ON AUGUST 22.

2. JUDGES ROBLES AND APONTE (REF B) REMAIN SUSPENDED BUT THIS ACTION BY BALLIVIAN AND SANTA CRUZ SUPERIOR COURT MUST BE CONFIRMED BY SUPREME COURT AT SUCRE. BALLIVIAN INFORMED EMBASSY AUGUST 22 THAT THIS CONFIRMATION WOULD TAKE PLACE WITHIN A FEW DAYS AND THAT

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JUDGES WOULD THEN BE REPLACED AND CASES CONTINUED. MEANWHILE CIVIL COURT JUDGES ARE EMPOWERED TO GRANT SALIDAS FOR MEDICAL AND OTHER PURPOSES AND TAKE CERTAIN LIMITED ACTIONS WITH REGARD TO CASES.

3. IN NEW DEVELOPMENT PAST TWO DAYS, JUDGE ROBLES, WHO IS FIGHTING HIS SUSPENSION, HAS (A) ACCUSED

SUB-SECRETARY BALLIVIAN OF ACCEPTING MONEY FROM EMBASSY TO RESOLVE MARRERO CASE, AND (B) ALLEGED THAT EMBASSY OFFERED MONEY TO ROBLES FOR MARRERO'S RELEASE, WHICH ROBLES DID NOT ACCEPT. THESE STORIES HAVE BEEN ON RADIO AND IN PRESS.

4. EMBASSY DOES NOT BELIEVE TRANSFER OF AMERICAN PRISONERS TO LA PAZ SHOULD BE CONSIDERED AT THIS TIME. IN FIRST PLACE, WITH APPOINTMENT OF NEW JUDGES WE ARE NOT SURE PREJUDICES AGAINST THEM WOULD EXIST. ALSO UNDER BOLIVIAN LAW DIFFICULT TO CHANGE VENUE UNLESS THREAT TO PRISONERS SAFETY COULD BE SHOWN. FINALLY, AULT AND CUNNINGHAM MUCH PREFER TO REMAIN SANTA CRUZ UNLESS THERE ARE COMPELLING REASONS TO MOVE. RECOMMEND WE DELAY FURTHER CONSIDERATION OF THIS POSSIBILITY FOR A WEEK OR SO.

5. REGARDING MRS. SHIE'S REPORT ON CUNNINGHAM'S "DEAL" WITH CONGRESSMAN WOLFF, WE KNOW NOTHING OF THIS MATTER. WE DOUBT, HOWEVER, THAT CUNNINGHAM IS INTO ANY FURTHER TROUBLE. RECENT EVENTS HAVE UNDERSTANDABLY MADE CUNNINGHAM EMOTIONALLY UPSET AND BELIEVE HE MISSES MARRERO WHO WAS MUCH MORE SOPHISTICATED AND STABILIZING INFLUENCE ON HIM.

6. DEPARTMENT MAY BE SURE THAT WE WILL BACKUP
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MRS. MCKENNEY TO THE UTMOST AND TAKE INTO CONSIDERATION AT ALL TIMES POSSIBLE DIFFICULTIES WITH HER PERSONAL POSITION IN SANTA CRUZ. MRS. MCKENNEY WAS OF THE GREATEST HELP DURING CODEL WOLFF VISIT AND DID EVERYTHING POSSIBLE TO ASSIST THEM.

7. EMBASSY MOST APPRECIATIVE OF MRS. SHIE'S REMARKS. SHE WAS GOOD COMPANY AND GOOD INFLUENCE ON PRISONERS WHILE IN SANTA CRUZ AND A HELP TO CONSUL KEMP AND TO EMBASSY.
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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01-Jan-1994 12:00:00 am
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: PRISONERS, JUDGES, COURTS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Sent Date: 23-Aug-1977 12:00:00 am
Decaption Date: 01-Jan-1960 12:00:00 am
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 22 May 2009
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1977LAPAZ06678
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D770304-0945
Format: TEL
From: LA PAZ
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1977/newtext/t19770834/aaaabcgj.tel
Line Count: 105
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: fbfc6856-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION ARA
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 77 STATE 198152, 77 LA PAZ 6561
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 29-Dec-2004 12:00:00 am
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 1518949
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: AMERICAN PRISONERS: SANTA CRUZ
TAGS: CARR, SHUM, CASC, BL
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odbc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/fbfc6856-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
22 May 2009
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 22 May 2009